

GEORGIA

Adopt-A-Stream

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Allison Hughes and Michael O'Shield, Editors



Adopt-A-Stream Database is Live

As of April 1, 2008, the Adopt-A-Stream database is accessible to all QA/QC volunteers. After many hours of work, the beta testing is complete and the database is ready to roll out statewide. To get to the database, go to www.georgiaadoptastream.org and click online database on the left hand side. Here, you will be able to enter your own data, prepare data collection reports, print certificates and even map your sites. The database is a major milestone for Georgia Adopt-A-Stream and can be regarded as one the most important monitoring tools for many years to come. The Adopt-A-Stream staff and partners will conduct database trainings at workshops and other outlets such as conferences. Also, be on the lookout for a postcard that will have FAQs and other information concerning the database. As always, we welcome your feedback so we can constantly make improvements to this new tool.

2007 Adopt-A-Stream Volunteer Award Winners

This year's **Volunteer of the Year** is **John Graham**. John is the Adopt-A-Stream coordinator for Columbia County and has been a certified data collector since 2002. As the County Coordinator, John takes his responsibilities very seriously. He has established monitoring sites on Crawford Creek, Reed Creek, Jones Creek, Mill Creek, Betty's Branch and Euchee Creek. John also publishes an Adopt-A-Stream newsletter and has added bacteria analysis to his monitoring data. He also participates in annual river cleanups and the Get the Dirt Out program, sponsored by the Savannah Riverkeeper. For his efforts, we congratulate John Graham, the Adopt-A-Stream Volunteer of the Year.



John Graham & friends



One of this year's **Extraordinary Volunteer Watershed Effort** awards goes to the **Holy Innocents' Episcopal School (HIES)**. Located in Sandy Springs, the school has played a major role in the education of local citizens and the local government about water quality issues for the past five years. They have adopted two tributaries of Long Island Creek, which flow through Allen Park. Their monitoring program includes visual, chemical and biological data collection as well as bacteria monitoring. Using AAS monitoring protocols, they discovered a failing septic tank that was contaminating the creek. This event motivated the students to initiate a letter writing campaign to improve the conditions of Allen Park. The City of Sandy Springs responded by providing \$70,000 to enhance the landscape and to reduce the amount of erosion in the park. Since 2002, the students have provided more than 600 volunteer hours to protect and restore their two streams. For these reasons, Holy Innocents' Episcopal School has been chosen for a 2007 Extraordinary Volunteer Watershed Effort award.

HIES students identify
macroinvertebrates



Students conduct biological monitoring on Flat Creek

Peachtree City's **McIntosh High School** is also the recipient of a 2007 **Extraordinary Volunteer Watershed Effort** award. Forty certified QA/QC students from McIntosh High dedicate a lot their time to insure their sites are monitored regularly and correctly. They monitor 10 sites within the Flat Creek watershed in Fayette County every month, even during the summer when they are out of school. In fact, as an incentive to continue in the program for the following school year, the students must attend 10 out of the 12 monitoring dates. In addition to their monitoring duties, students reach out to the residents in the Flat Creek watershed and provide information about nonpoint source pollution and present them with ideas on how to reduce their impact. For their commitment to protect their watershed, we honor McIntosh High School with this award.

Perseverance, environmental awareness, a keen understanding of water policy and a desire to act when a problem is detected are the traits we look for in our Red Flag Award. The **City of Sandy Springs** and **Trees Sandy Springs** are a shining example of these traits; therefore they have been selected as our recipients of this year's **Red Flag Award**. Both entities have aided in the protection and restoration of two tributaries of Long Island Creek in the Chattahoochee River Watershed, which are monitored by Holy Innocents Episcopal School. Their understanding of water quality and environmental awareness has led to a \$70,000 project to restore the stream banks in Allen Park, which Trees Sandy Springs is helping design with native plant species in mind. We congratulate the City of Sandy Springs and Trees Sandy Springs for their extraordinary efforts.



City of Sandy Springs Councilwoman McEnery and Mayor Galambos



Mrs. Claessen (right) at a cleanup

Mrs. Ellen Claessen from Gainesville has been honored with the **Excellence in Data Collection** award. In 1999, concerned with the water quality of Balus Creek in her backyard, Mrs. Claessen became chemically certified. She has since collected QA/QC data for the past 8 years. Enjoying her volunteer duties so much, she adopted two more sites on Flat Creek and Mitchell Creek. She even recruited another volunteer, Ms. Arlene Martin. Today they are known as the A&E Investigators. She has been active on many fronts and has volunteered for every stream cleanup with the City of Gainesville. She shares her knowledge of water quality issues with friends, neighbors and anyone she meets. Brian Wiley, Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator for the City of Gainesville, said, "She is truly an example what each local (Adopt-A-Stream) coordinator would love to have as a volunteer." Mrs. Ellen Claessen has been given this award for her many years of service.

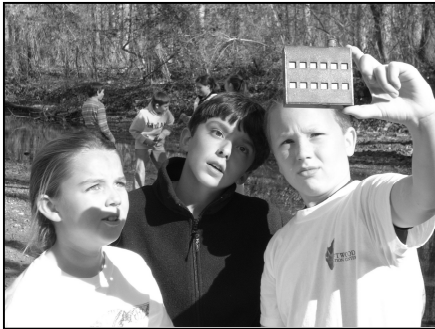
The 2007 **Outstanding Outreach and Partnership** award is awarded to **Didi Johnson** of Cobb County. Since 2003, Ms. Johnson has been a member of the Sierra Club Centennial Group and has served as their liaison with Cobb County Adopt-A-Stream. She took the lead role for the first Cobb County watershed monitoring event, partnering with Cobb County Adopt-A-Stream to sample 30 sites in one day. Her duties included organizing the site selection efforts and leading nine other organizers and 30 volunteers. "The event could not be possible without the commitment and leadership of Didi Johnson", said Jennifer McCoy of Cobb County Adopt-A-Stream. She also leads her Sierra Club group by coordinating the annual QA/QC certification workshops and organizing their Rivers Alive cleanups. With her help, the Sierra Club has tripled the number of sites they've adopted.. Due to her hard work and dedication, Mrs. Didi Johnson is truly a leader in outstanding outreach and partnership.



Mrs. Johnson at the River Rendezvous

2007 Adopt-A-Stream Watershed Award Winners

The Adopt-A-Stream Watershed Award honors the efforts of city, county and regional governmental and non-governmental agencies working to improve Georgia's waterways through participation in the Adopt-A-Stream program. Through a competitive application process, the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream advisory board is pleased to announce **Cobb County Water System Adopt-A-Stream**, the **City of Gainesville Adopt-A-Stream** and **Elachee – Chicopee Woods Watershed Stakeholders** for their outstanding programs that exemplify the Adopt-A-Stream goals. The following program descriptions highlight each award winner:



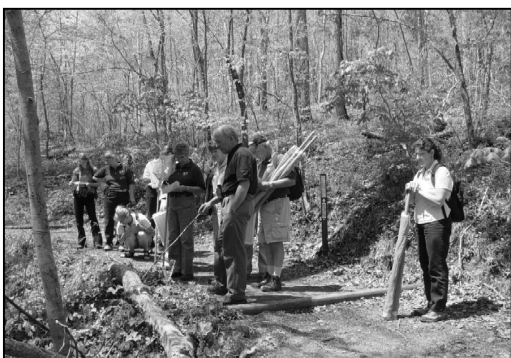
Cobb County students test pH

Cobb County Water System Adopt-A-Stream's theme for 2007 was expanding their program. Their program has three certified trainers that led 25 workshops, certifying 276 volunteers. Cobb County Adopt-A-Stream also provides monitoring equipment for all of its volunteers. In 2007, Cobb hosted its first watershed monitoring event, in which 30 sites were monitored in one day. Additionally, the first Watershed Stewardship Fair was organized so that volunteers could come together to discuss water quality and to share data. Partnering with the Cobb County School System, the Color Your Watershed program provided grants to local schools in which watershed murals could be designed and created. We congratulate Cobb County Water System Adopt-A-Stream for their exemplary program.

The **City of Gainesville's Adopt-A-Stream** program continued to work with their citizens to provide water education through the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream program. With four certified Adopt-A-Stream trainers on staff, they have logged 270 hours of chemical and biological monitoring. They also have mapped all of their Adopt-A-Stream monitoring sites with GIS, and the sites are available for volunteers to view. In 2007, they spoke with over three thousand citizens of all ages through fairs, festivals and presentations. They also increased public awareness by creating a super hero, Captain Conservation, to educate the citizens of all ages on the importance of protecting and conserving our drinking water. Also, the Adopt-A-Stream staff provided a workshop on nonpoint source pollution prevention techniques to 254 city employees. In 2007, the City of Gainesville became the first local government to offer plumbing retrofits in North Georgia.



Captain Conservation with a captive audience



Elachee-Chicopee Woods Stakeholders examine the riparian forest

The **Elachee-Chicopee Woods Watershed Stakeholders** was selected as a recipient of the Watershed Award for their commitment to education, partnership and restoration. Creating partnerships with many stakeholders, including Chicopee Woods Area Park Commission, the City of Gainesville, the State of Georgia, local business and homeowners and the general public has enabled them to reach a wider audience and to increase awareness of water quality issues in their community. Through these partnerships, Elachee-Chicopee Woods was awarded an \$800,000 Clean Water Act section 319(h) federal grant for stream restoration and public education, which will restore 39,000 linear feet of unstable stream bank. In 2007, they provided Adopt-A-Stream training to over 150 volunteers in both chemical and biological monitoring.

Congratulations to All of Our Award Winners

Allison Hughes Swims Upstream...

At the last EEA Conference Awards Banquet, Allison Hughes proclaimed to the 100 plus participants that, "I have the greatest job in the world!" And if you had heard her say it, you would have believed it. If you ever wondered what it would take for her to leave the Adopt-A-Stream State Coordinator position, we now have the answer: island paradise living in Western Samoa. Allison and her husband have accepted positions to work in the environmental education field, managing a small school for American students on the island of Western Samoa. We're sorry to see her go, but we're also excited for Allison and her husband as they accept new challenges clear across the world in their little slice of paradise. Best of luck Allison!



**Please visit our Calendar of Events at www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org
for upcoming monitoring workshops and Adopt-A-Stream events.**

The Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Newsletter is published six times per year. For more information about the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream program or to contribute to the newsletter, call or write to:

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(404) 675-6240
www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org**

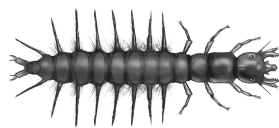
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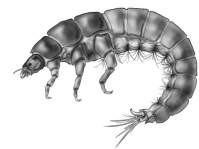
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